



Fiscal Year 2010 Report

Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

KANSAS

COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF
AND HARD OF HEARING

The mission of the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is to advocate for and facilitate equal access to quality, coordinated and comprehensive services that enhance the quality of life for Kansans who are deaf and hard of hearing.

November 2, 2010

The Honorable Governor
Kansas State Capitol, Room 226-S
Topeka, KS 66612-1590

The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) is pleased to present our annual report reviewing the status of state services and recommending priorities for the development and coordination of services for Kansans who are Deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing, as required by K.S.A. 75-5391.

KCDHH continues to work collaboratively with service providers, state agencies, and Deaf and hard of hearing Kansans to promote effective service delivery and ensure the safety and well-being of all Kansans. In the past year, the Commission completed the development of curriculum for emergency management professionals and first responders to address the needs of Kansans who are Deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing in the event of a disaster situation, such as tornadoes or other emergencies. As we look forward into the next year, the KCDHH will continue this type of collaborative work, as the Commission begins outreach efforts to promote access to communication in health care settings for Kansans who are Deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing.

KCDHH has built a strong partnership among Kansans who are Deaf or hard of hearing, sign language interpreters, educators, state agencies, and community service providers to address access needs in all areas of the state. The work of these groups promises to offer all Kansans timely, reliable information about sign language interpreters, quality interpreting services, and how to obtain interpreting services when requested. This work involves a careful, studied approach to balance each community's need with the capacity of a limited Commission to adequately meet the various demands imposed by development of more formal registration, certification and educational requirements for sign language interpreters.

Limited resources have resulted in staff losses for the KCDHH, which has made meeting community needs to respond to requests for interpreters, to provide educational information about communication access for people who are Deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing, and to continue to administer certification and testing programs difficult. KCDHH will continue to work hard to meet our statutory requirements and address community needs despite diminished resources and increased demands.

On behalf of the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, I hope this report will provide a guide for Kansas policymakers in developing, coordinating and improving services and communication access for all Kansans.

Sincerely,
Kim Weidler, CI/CT
KCDHH Chair

Introduction

The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH), established in 1982, is mandated to “serve as an advisory board to the Governor on the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing by preparing an annual report which reviews the status of all state services to the deaf and hard of hearing within Kansas, and to recommend priorities to the Governor for the development and coordination of services to the deaf and hard of hearing.”

It is the intention of this report to highlight the Fiscal Year 2010 activities; report on the status of state services with respect to the deaf and hard of hearing citizens of Kansas; and recommend priorities for the development and coordination of services to the deaf and hard of hearing.

The following goals for fiscal year 2010 were set by the Commission:

Priorities	Outcomes	Start date	Targeted date
1. Public Safety Curriculum will be adopted.	A curriculum will be available for public safety personnel (fire, emergency responders, police, etc).	July 2009	Dec 2009
2. A Kansas Public Safety Curriculum will be disseminated.	Training will be available for both public safety personnel and the community.	Dec 2009	June 2010
3. The standard to be on the Registry Policy will be completed.	The Registry Policy will be completed and applied to the Registry of Sign Language Interpreters.	July 2009	Mar 2010
4. The KQAS Psychometric Study recommendations will be implemented.	The KQAS system will be in alignment with the recommendations. The raters will be trained.	July 2009	June 2010
5. Write Issue Paper requesting funds to develop new DVDs for KQAS.	Funds will allow KCDHH to develop a set of DVD test materials for the KQAS	July 2009	June 2010
6. Continue Public Awareness and Education	At least 4 workshops/trainings will be promoted.	July 2009	June 2010

Additionally the executive director set the following goals:

- 1) Attend three of the four Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) meetings during fiscal year 2010. Outcome: Improve collaboration and relationship between KCDHH and the Kansas Department of Education;
- 2) 2) Make one new contact per month to increase awareness about KCDHH and its services. Outcome: Increase visibility and awareness of KCDHH services;
- 3) 3) Attend training to learn and understand the SRS new Performance Management Process (PMP); this new PMP is the new evaluation system which is now the standard

format for all SRS employees. It is also merit based which encourages improved performances among employees. Outcome: continual coaching, and counseling with staff shall increase productivity among personnel.

- 4) Participated in the Deaf-Blind Rehabilitation on-line course offered by the Helen Keller National Center and the Northern Illinois University through the RSA grant (continues until December 1, 2010). Outcome: Provide reliable information and resources to the KS Rehabilitation Counselors and constituents.

The fiscal year 2010 goals that were met and resulted in good outcomes were as follows:

- 1) *Public safety curriculum will be adopted.* KCDHH developed the curricula for Kansas with four modules. The training modules allow flexibility depending on the type of audience. Prior to approval several key stakeholders were involved in reviewing the curricula including the Kansas State Highway Patrol training department.
- 2) *A Kansas Public Safety Curriculum will be disseminated.* The training curriculum for the law enforcement is ready for dissemination. The KCDHH will begin training during Fiscal Year 2011.
- 3) *The KQAS Psychometric Study recommendations will be implemented.* The Executive Director was able to revise the rating system and conduct a thorough study on the reliability and validity of the test. Trainings for the raters are still on-going due to the influx of the evaluations which occurred during the spring/summer months. The new rating system will begin as early as September 2010.
- 4) *Continue Public Awareness and Education.* KCDHH continues to collaborate and promote workshops/trainings with other community based organizations such as Kansas Association of the Deaf, and the Greater KC ADARA Chapter. During the fiscal year 2010 KCDHH promoted 25 workshops/trainings. The Executive Director presented 5 workshops/trainings. The trainings ranged from sensitivity trainings to awareness and education on assistive technology for individuals with hearing loss or speech impairments.

The 4th annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Day at the Capitol was a successful event during fiscal year 2010. KCDHH began hosting this annual event since February 2006 to increase awareness about Deafness and hearing loss during the legislative session. Every year the event continues to attract larger crowds. The theme “Our Job: Promote, Preserve and Protect” was presented by a Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, President of the Gallaudet University (see attached flyer).

During the fiscal year there were challenges in achieving some of the goals. For instance the goal for completing the standard for the Registry Policy was not completed due to scheduling conflicts. The proposed registry policy was issued for public comments/feedback during the month of May for 45 days. Towards the end of the comment period there was a request for a forum hosted by the Statewide Kansas Association of Interpreters. Comments were submitted to KCDHH on June 30. The Commission is reviewing the comments and will make the recommended revisions no later than October 8, 2010 (Fiscal Year 2011).



KCDHH faced an additional challenge in writing an issue paper asking for funds to develop new DVD for the KQAS test. This goal was not achieved because a task force was implemented to study the pros and cons of transitioning to a National Certification (for sign language interpreters) during the fiscal year and budget constraints. The task force recommended that KCDHH considers the transition from KQAS to National Certification. The Commission then created (April 2010) a task force to set the infrastructure (timeline) for this transition to the national certification. This goal was suspended indefinitely.

Overall it was a very productive year for KCDHH. The following report shall provide an overview of the fiscal year 2010 and the statutes which sets the program.

Commission Members

State Fiscal Year 2010

Pursuant to K.S.A. 75-5392 The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall consist of 17 members who shall be responsible for the policies and management of the Commission. The membership shall consist of the following:

1. Five ex officio members, the administrative head, or a designee, of Vocational Rehabilitation services, (B) social services, (C) the department of health and environment, (D) the state board of education, and (E) the state school for the deaf.
2. Twelve members appointed by the Governor as follows: Six members who are deaf or hard of hearing persons, one of whom shall be representative of the Kansas Association of the Deaf; one member who is a speech language pathologist; one member from the state registry of interpreters for the deaf; one member who is a psychologist, nurse, teacher, rehabilitation counselor or social worker serving the deaf or hard of hearing population; one member who is not deaf or hard of hearing and who is the parent of a deaf or hard of hearing person; one member who is a clinical audiologist; and one member who is a board-certified otolaryngologist.

Name	Representation	Term
Elizabeth Abbey	Ex-officio (KDHE)	n/a
Candace Cobb	Ex-officio (SRS)	n/a
Jack L. Cooper	Deaf (KAD representative)	April 2008 – April 2011
James Deister	Deaf (late deafened)	April 2008 – April 2011
Suzanne Dennis	Social Worker	April 2009 – April 2012
Michael Donnelly	Ex-officio (Rehab Services)	n/a
Michael D. Franklin, M.D.	Otolaryngologist	April 2009 – April 2010
Gregory E. Heller	Deaf	April 2010 – April 2013
Eileen Honors	Audiologist	April 2009 – April 2012
Richard K. Kerby	Deaf	April 2009 – April 2012
Robert A. Maile	Ex-officio (KSSD)	n/a
Lorraine Michel	Speech/Language Pathologist	April 2009 – April 2012
Dennis Selznick	Deaf (hard of hearing)	April 2008 – April 2011
Madeleine E. Starks	Deaf	April 2010 – April 2013
Teresa F. Sturgeon	Parent	April 2007 – April 2010
Kim L. Symansky	Ex-officio (KSDE)	n/a
Kim Weidler	State Registry of Interpreters	April 2007 – April 2010

Governor Mark Parkinson made the following appointments to the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

- Michael Franklin, M.D. (Succeeds Dr. Robert Weatherly) Otolaryngologist Member
- Gregory Heller (re-appointment) Deaf Member
- Madeleine E. Starks (re-appointment) Deaf Member

There are currently three positions with their term expiring April 2010. Dr. Michael Franklin did not want to be re-appointed; we are waiting on the selection of his successor. Ms. Kim Weidler and Ms. Teresa F. Sturgeon wish to be re-appointed for another term.

State Fiscal Year 2010 Progress

Pursuant to K.S.A. 75-5391 through 75-5393, KCDHH is housed within the Kansas Department of Social Rehabilitation Services (SRS) and is within the Rehabilitation Services of Kansas. The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall consist of 17 members who shall be responsible for policies and management of the Commission. The statutes K. S. A. 75-5392 and 5393 direct the KCDHH's goals and program. The following will outline the Commission's achievements and progress during Fiscal Year 2009.

KCDHH executive director and the staff accomplished several activities/goals during the fiscal year 2009. The following shall highlight some of the major accomplishments:

K.S.A. 75-5391

1) Advocate services affecting the deaf and hard of hearing in the areas of public services, health care, educational, vocational and employment opportunity;

KCDHH continues to advocate services affecting Deaf, Deaf-Blind, hard of hearing and families with Deaf and hard of hearing infants or children. Additionally KCDHH participated on several committees or councils:

- a. Participated on the Sound Beginnings (Kansas Department of Health and Environment) advisory council, an early hearing detection and intervention committee which focuses on newborn hearing screening.
- b. Attended the annual Johnson County Human Services and Aging Advisory Council.
- c. Participated on the bi-annual Johnson County Community College Interpreter Training Program Advisory Council and the on-site accreditation interview.
- d. Collaborated with the Greater Kansas City ADARA chapter in co-hosting and coordinating the monthly meetings.
- e. Commissioner Dennis Selznick participated on the Kansas Relay Services, Inc. Board.
- f. Commissioner Gregory Heller participated on the Deaf Cultural Center Board.

2) Act as a bureau of information for the deaf and hard of hearing to state agencies and public institutions providing general health and mental health care, employment, vocational, and educational services, and to local agencies and programs;

- a. KCDHH staff continues receiving calls regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requesting clarification on the law and/or advocacy.
- b. KCDHH processed 321 requests for interpreter referrals.
- c. KCDHH continues the information and referral via land line telephone.
- d. KCDHH provided workshops/trainings to various groups.
- e. Email contacts and the SRS website (www.srs.ks.gov/agency/rs/Pages/KCDHH/KCDHH.aspx) occurred. It is hard to determine how many hits have been to this web site as we do not have access to this information. Additionally the SRS website is undergoing some changes and it will impact the accessibility of information for the public.

3) *Collect facts and statistics and other special studies of conditions affecting the health and welfare of the deaf and hard of hearing in this state;*

- a. KCDHH staff and the Executive Director are continually searching for and keeping abreast of national and local issues affecting deaf and hard of hearing. For example, reading and subscribing to various electronic news and newsletters to keep abreast of emerging technology and issues affecting those with hearing loss.
- b. On June 18, 2010 the National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was formally incorporated which allows the KCDHH to work collaboratively with a national organization in standardizing appropriate data collection.

4) *Provide for a mutual exchange of ideas and information on the national, State and local levels;*

The Executive Director is involved with the nation-wide Coalition of Organizations for Accessible Technology list serv. This list serv provides the Executive Director access to viable information on national issues and legislation related to technology for those who have hearing loss. Additionally, KCDHH is actively involved with the National Association of the Deaf (NAD); the Registry of Interpreter for the Deaf (RID); the Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI). Additionally the KCDHH is involved with the local and state organizations such as the Kansas Association of the Deaf (KAD); and the Kansas City Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). KCDHH participates on the National Association of State Agencies Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing list serv to provide and/or share information with other State Commissions. This organization is became incorporated and is a national organization.

5) *Provide public education of prenatal and postnatal warning signs of conditions which may lead to deafness or hearing impairment in the fetus or newborn child;*

Technology and science have evolved since the Statute K.S.A. #65-1, 157a – Kansas Newborn infant hearing screening, was implemented. The State Department on Health and Environment oversees the Hearing infant screening with an Advisory council on the SoundBeginnings. There is concern and issues related to *Loss to Follow Up*. The percentages still remain high compared to national statistics. The issue is the infant(s) often get loss during the referral process. The hospital may do the referral and not follow up with the family; or the audiologist sees the family but does not provide appropriate referral and resources for the family. The SoundBeginnings advisory council created goals for the fiscal year 2011 to address this issue as it is important that the infant and the family receive services and the infant get immediate assistance such as language, hearing aids or cochlear implant.

KCDHH is aware of the growing number of baby boomers with hearing loss among other medical issues such as vision loss. The KCDHH is actively conducting presentations and outreaching the hard of hearing groups. This year Rebecca Rosenthal, executive director of the KCDHH did two presentations on Communication Enhancement: Assistive Technology for persons with hearing and speech impairments. One of the presentations

was with the Shepherd's Center of Topeka. In addition to this, KCDHH did a presentation on "Ear Protection" for the staff at the local Builders Choice Aggregate. KCDHH hopes to continue this outreach during the fiscal year 2011.

- 6) *Encourage and assist local governments in the development of programs for the deaf and hard of hearing;*

The KCDHH executive director and the staff continue to provide information and referral and/ or technical assistance to assist local governments in providing services to the deaf and hard of hearing. The KCDHH will continue to host the annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing event at the Capitol as a venue of providing information and referral. The KCDHH will set a goal for next fiscal year 2011 to the public safety personnel; i.e., law enforcement, fire and emergency medical technician.

- 7) *Cooperate with public and private agencies and units of local, state and federal government in promoting coordination in programs for the deaf and hard of hearing;*

KCDHH continues to collaborate and work closely with various community based programs as well as Rehabilitation Services, Johnson County Mental Health Services, Johnson County Human Services and Aging, Western Kansas Deaf and Hard of Hearing Referral and Resource Center in Hays, and SoundBeginnings to promote coordination in programs for the deaf and hard of hearing.

- 8) *Provide for the social, emotional, educational and vocational needs of the deaf and hard of hearing and their families;*

KCDHH provides information and updates about emerging programs to the community via electronic list serves and newsletters, and other means.

- 9) *Serve as an advisory board to the Governor on the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing by preparing an annual report which reviews the status of all state services to the deaf and hard of hearing within Kansas, and to recommend priorities to the governor for the development and coordination of services to the deaf and hard of hearing;*

KCDHH continues to provide annual fiscal year reports to the Governor. Additionally, KCDHH participates on various Advisory Councils and provides technical assistance as needed for the development and coordination of services to the deaf and hard of hearing.

KCDHH attends most of the Kansas Association of the Deaf and the Kansas Association of the Interpreters- RID board meetings.



10) Make recommendations for needed improvements and serve as an advisory board concerning new legislation affecting the deaf and hard of hearing.

KCDHH is willing and able to serve as an advisor concerning new legislation or pending legislation affecting the deaf and hard of hearing.

Recommendations

The following fiscal year 2011 goals are based on concerns and interests expressed by the constituents and are in alignment with the KCDHH's mission.

Priorities	Outcomes	Start date	Target date
1. Adapting the Public Safety Curriculum for Emergency Services and Fire	A curriculum will be available for emergency responders and fire personnel	July 2010	Dec. 2010
2. The Kansas Public Safety Curriculum will be provided throughout the State.	Provide trainings to the police academy, fire academy in Hutchinson, highway patrol in Salina, JCCC police academy, a statewide association of public safety entity and target one city (i.e., Wichita or Topeka)	July 2010	June 2011
3. ADA Awareness Training to hospitals related to deaf and hard of hearing issues	A minimum of 4 hospitals including Topeka will receive training on ADA Awareness related to deaf/hard of hearing and deaf-blind.	July 2010	June 2011
4. Implement the Registry of Interpreters	A complete registry with the standards will be available to post on the KCDHH web site and for the public.	July 2010	June 2011

Throughout the 2010 fiscal year, the Commission and the Executive Director addressed a myriad of issues, and concerns from individuals who have a hearing loss. Individuals who contact KCDHH are both constituents and professionals looking for information and referral, advice on self-advocacy, and assistance related to interpreter issues and concerns. Many of our contacts are related to having access to communication with their physicians, or with hospital personnel. The Commission received two separate comments related to a local Topeka hospital not providing appropriate access for a Deaf patient requiring a sign language interpreter. Based on the comments, harm occurred among the two patients. KCDHH implemented a goal addressing this issue for fiscal year 2011. KCDHH strongly encourages the Kansas Governor and the Kansas Legislature to consider this when reviewing health care issue for all citizens residing in the State of Kansas. All citizens regardless of disability, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation should have full and equal access to health care.

On behalf of the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, I submit this report in hopes that you have a good understanding of what the commission does on a daily basis and the challenges we face.



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